

A journey through disasters 1992-2014

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10 December, 2014

What is disaster?

A disaster is a **sudden**, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the community's or society's ability to cope using its own resources. Though often caused by nature, disasters can have human origins. IFRC

H x V = Disaster

The Disasters I worked in

- * 1992 Super floods:
- * 1997 Floods
- * 99-2001 Draught
- * 2005 Earthquake
- * 2009 Flight of IDPs from Malakand
- * 2010 Mega floods
- * 2011 Floods
- * 2012 Floods
- * 2013 Floods
- * 2014 Floods

Decade wise losses

Decade	US \$ million	Lost lives	Affected villages	Flooded Areas (Sq-km)
1950-59	1720.00	3200	36954	139233
1973-78	11868.00	2266	48121	193577
1981-88	1367.40	671	3065	13310
1992-95	4229.05	2030	21682	61012
2010	10000.00	1985	17553	160000
Total	29,184.45	10,152	127,375	567,132

What I saw & observed?

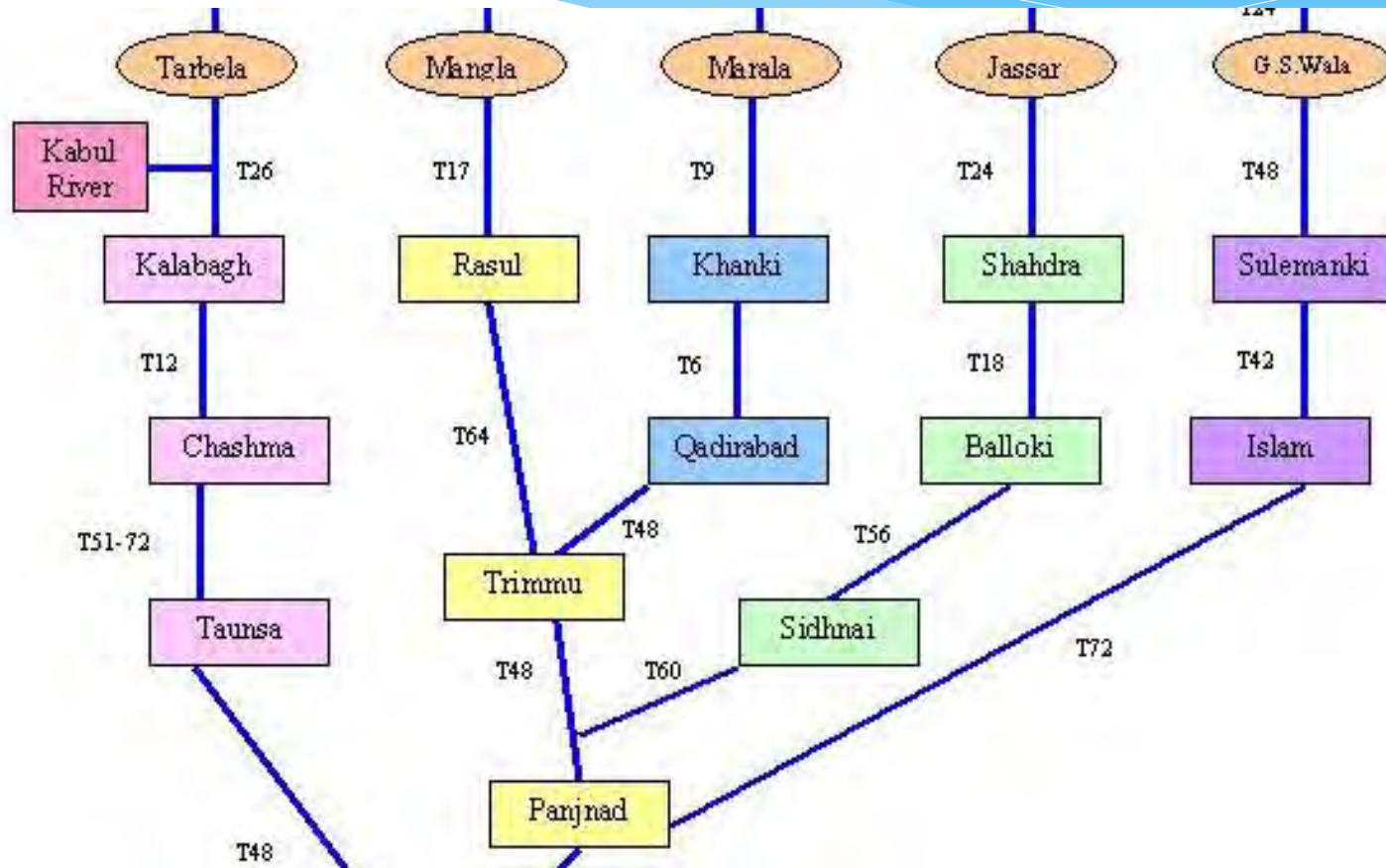
- * Disasters: blessing for mullah, politicians, governments, private sector, NGOs etc.
- * Flood prone people don't leave their area despite repeated warnings.
- * Disaster hit people tell lies in order to grab relief items.
- * The people of kutchra areas are dacoits.
- * Thin presence of public services: schools, health centers in riverine belt.
- * Thick presence of coercive hand of the state apparatus and its close collaboration with feudal/political elite.

Disasters: What I learnt?

- * Public policies & interventions disempower/marginalise riverine communities and undermine their resilience, traditional coping mechanisms and aggravate their vulnerabilities.
- * Gender segregation and restrictions on women weakened.
- * Repeated mega disasters failed to fracture stubbornness of our governments not to learn lessons: “BFG”
- * All disasters are manmade & government induced.

A Case Study of 2014 Floods

Flood Routes

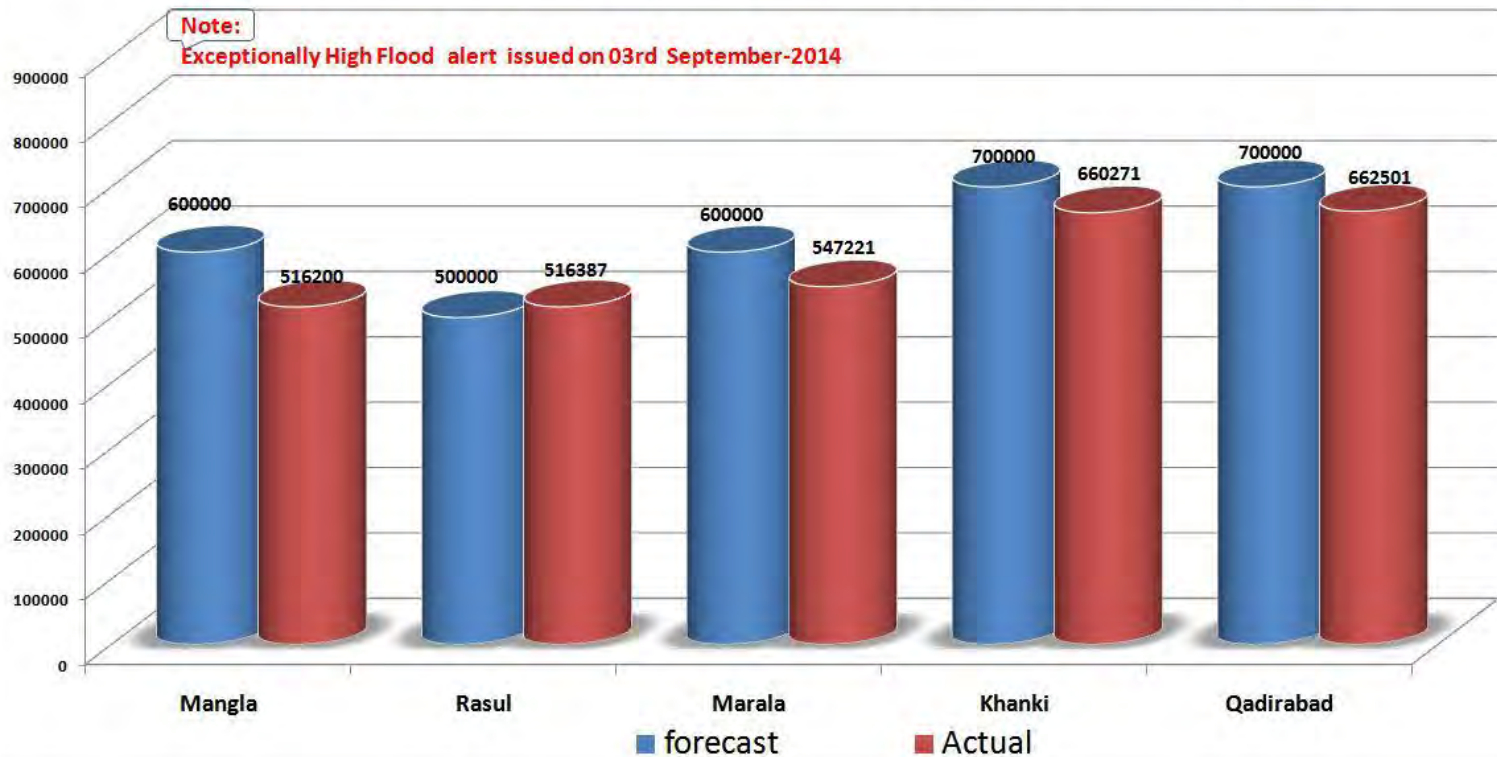


Flood warning

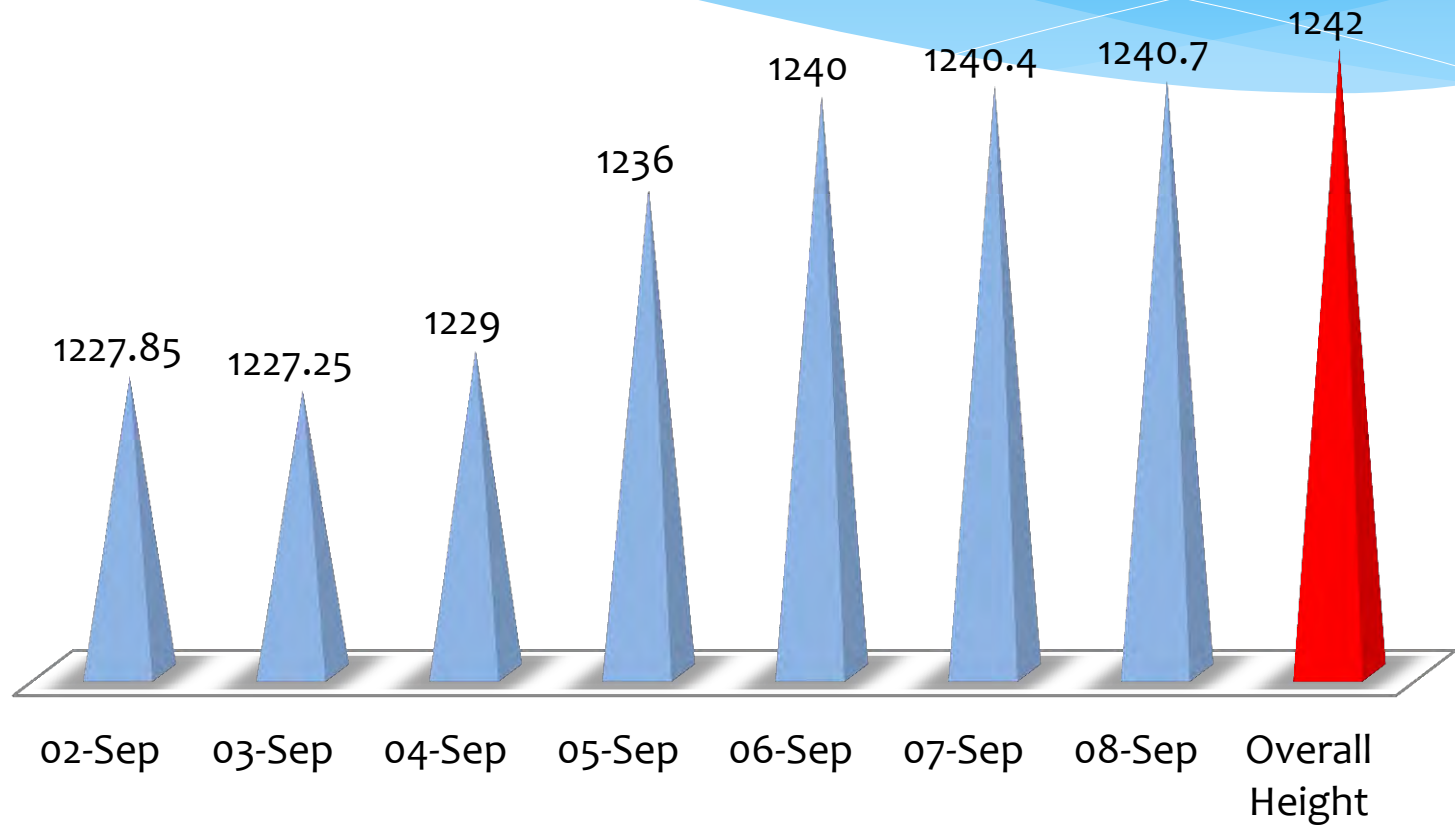
- * Aug 3, APP quoted FFD that Chenab River would attain a high flood at various places during next 24 hours.
- * High flood may inundate low-lying districts of Gujranwala, Sialkot, Gujrat, Hafizabad and Mandi Bahauddin around the river-bed.
- * Authorities warned to take precautionary measures to avoid the losses of human lives and property.

3rd Sep Flood Forecasting Division Issued another alert

1st Flood Wave Comparison of Actual and Forecasted Discharge(Cusces)



Water level at Mangla Dam



Inflow and outflow of water from major structures

September 3 to 11, 2014

(000 cusecs)

Structure	Mangla		Marala		Qadirabad		Trimmu	
Design Capacity	1,060		1,100		807		645	
Inflow - outflow	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out
3 Sep	23	19	42	15	31	9	21	9
4 Sep	150	15	136	109	31	9	23	9
5 Sep	516	15	485	480	271	261	25	9
6 Sep	190	282	320	323	649	656	55	71
7 Sep	124	101	563	560	774	776	124	127
8 Sep	103	90	127	124	256	256	163	163
9 Sep	80	54	85	82	102	103	298	298
10 Sep	82	73	79	76	94	94	509	509
11 Sep	77	73	79	76	89	89	592	592
Compiled from FFD Lahore								

Repetition of blunders

- * On 9th September 1992 about 1 million cusecs of water was released from Mangla dam while River Chenab was at its exceptionally high level.
- * On 30th July 6 am 600,000 cusecs of water was released from Tarbela dam at a time when 400,000 of cusecs of water was flowing in River Kabul at Attock bridge.
- * Unnecessary breaches multiplied losses.

What is Disaster Risk Reduction?

Disaster risk reduction is the concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the causal factors of disasters. Reducing exposure to hazards, lessening vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improving preparedness and early warning for adverse events are all examples of disaster risk reduction. UN-ISDR

Efforts versus Results

Efforts

- * 1990s stop disaster decade
- * HFA 2005 -2015
- * MDGs 2005 -2015

Results

- * Globally during 2005-14, 1.5 billion people got affected by disasters, 144 million were displaced and about 0.7 million people were killed.
- * Total economic losses about \$1.3 trillion.
- * In Pakistan between the 90s and 2000-08 the number of affected people were doubled from 17.5 million to 33.03 million.
- * During the same periods, the economic losses jumped from \$1.3m to \$17.0m per year. The damage caused by the 2010 floods cost the country and its people about US10.85 billion which makes one-third of the country's budget 2009-10.

A way forward

- * Amend disaster law
- * Let the disaster prone people take the leadEstablish strong local government system.
- * Improve governance.
- * Establish mechanisms for transparent accountability.
- * Address poverty, inequalities, deprivations and vulnerabilities
- * Change disaster narrative

Dominant versus Alternative

Dominant

- * Blame nature, global warming, victims, India etc.
- * Take shelter by declaring flooding as sudden and unprecedented occurrence.
- * God's wrath.
- * Relief

Alternative

- * Do soul searching: Identify underlying factors,
- * Analyse causes of poor governance,
- * Trust people.
- * DRR.
- * Liberate DRR from elite capture.

DRR?

